



## *Pius X* *Motu Proprio*



**A**MONG the cares of the pastoral office, not only of this Supreme Chair, which We, though unworthy, occupy through the inscrutable disposition of Providence, but of every local church, a leading one is without question that of maintaining and promoting the decorum of the House of God in which the august mysteries of religion are celebrated, and where the Christian people assemble to receive the grace of the Sacraments, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the altar, to adore the most august Sacrament of the Lord's Body and to unite in the common prayer of the Church in the public and solemn liturgical offices. Nothing should have place, therefore, in the temple calculated to disturb or even merely to diminish the piety and devotion of the faithful, nothing that may give reasonable cause for disgust or scandal, nothing, above all, which directly offends the decorum and the sanctity of the sacred functions and is thus unworthy of the House of Prayer and the Majesty of God. We do not touch separately on the abuses in this matter which may arise. Today Our attention is directed to one of the most common of them, one of the most difficult to eradicate, and the existence of which is sometimes to be deplored in places where everything else is deserving of the highest praise—the beauty and sumptuousness of the temple, the splendor and the accurate performance of the ceremonies, the attendance of the clergy, the gravity and piety of the officiating ministers. Such is the abuse affecting sacred chant and music. And, indeed, whether it is owing to the very nature of this art, fluctuating and variable as it is in itself, or to the succeeding changes in tastes and habits with the course of time, or to the fatal influence exercised on sacred art by profane and theatrical art, or to the pleasure that music directly produces, and that is not always easily contained within the right limits, or finally to the many prejudices on the matter, so lightly introduced and so tenaciously maintained even among responsible and pious persons, the fact remains that there is a

general tendency to deviate from the right rule prescribed by the end for which art is admitted to the service of public worship and which is set forth very clearly in the ecclesiastical canons, in the ordinances of the general and provincial councils, in the prescriptions which have at various times emanated from the sacred Roman congregations, and from Our Predecessors, the Sovereign Pontiffs.

It is grateful for Us to be able to acknowledge with real satisfaction the large amount of good that has been effected in this respect during the last decade in this Our fostering city of Rome, and in many churches in Our country, but in a more especial way among some nations in which illustrious men, full of zeal for the worship of God, have, with the approval of the Holy See and under the direction of the bishops, united in flourishing societies and restored sacred music to the fullest honor in all their churches and chapels. Still the good work that has been done is very far indeed from being common to all, and when We consult Our own personal experience and take into account the great number of complaints that reached Us during the short time that has elapsed since it pleased the Lord to elevate Our humility to the supreme summit of the Roman Pontificate. We consider it Our first duty, without further delay, to raise Our voice at once in reproof and condemnation of all that is seen to be out of harmony with the right rule above indicated, in the functions of public worship and in the performance of the ecclesiastical offices. Filled as We are with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, we deem it necessary to provide before aught else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. And it is vain to hope that the blessing of heaven will descend abundantly upon us, when our homage to the Most High, instead of ascending in the odor of sweetness, puts into the Hand of the Lord the scourges wherewith of old the Divine Redeemer drove the unworthy profaners from the temple.

Hence, in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters which have already been commanded, We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music in the functions of public worship, and to gather together in a general survey the principal prescriptions of the Church against the more common abuses in this subject. We do, therefore, publish, *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge, Our present instruction, to which, as to a juridical code of sacred music (*quasi a codice giuridice della musica sacra*), We will with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.

### INSTRUCTION ON SACRED MUSIC

#### I.—General Principles

1. Sacred music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It contributes to the decorum and the splendor of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aims is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries.

2. Sacred music should consequently possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and precisely sanctity and goodness of form, from which its other character of universality spontaneously springs.

It must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.

It must be true art, for otherwise it will be impossible for it to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds.

But it must, at the same time, be universal in the sense that while every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinated in such a manner to the general characteristics of sacred music that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them.

**II.—The different kinds of Sacred Music.**

3. These qualities are to be found, in the highest degree, in the Gregorian Chant, which is, consequently, the chant proper to the Roman Church, the only chant she has inherited from the ancient fathers, which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices, which she directly proposes to the faithful as her own, which she prescribes exclusively for some parts of the liturgy, and which the most recent studies have so happily restored to their integrity and purity.

On these grounds the Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: The more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savour the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy is it of the temple.

The ancient traditional Gregorian Chant must therefore, be largely restored to the function of public worship and everybody must take for certain that an ecclesiastical function loses nothing of its solemnity when it is accompanied by no other music but this.

Special efforts are to be made to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant by the people, so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times.

4. The above-mentioned qualities are also possessed in an excellent degree by the classic polyphony, especially of the Roman school, which reached the greatest perfection in the fifteenth century, owing to the works of Pierluigi da Palestrina, and continued subsequently to produce compositions of excellent quality from the liturgical and musical standpoint. The classic polyphony agrees admirably with Gregorian Chant, the supreme model of all sacred music, and hence it has been found worthy of a place side by side with the Gregorian Chant in the more solemn functions of the Church, such as those of the Pontifical Chapel. This, too, must therefore be restored largely in ecclesiastical functions, especially in the more important basilicas, in cathedrals and in the churches and chapels of seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions in which the necessary means are usually not lacking.

5. The Church has always recognized and favored the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of the cult everything good and beautiful discovered by the genius in the course of ages—always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently, modern music is also admitted in the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions.

Still, since modern music has risen mainly to serve profane uses, greater care must be taken with regard to it, in order that the musical compositions of modern style which are admitted in the Church may contain nothing profane, be free from reminiscences of motifs adopted in the theatres, and be not fashioned even in their external forms after the manner of profane pieces.

6. Among the different kinds of modern music, that which appears less suitable for accompanying the functions of public worship is the theatrical style, which was in the greatest vogue, especially in Italy, during the last century. This, of its very nature, is diametrically opposed to the Gregorian Chant and the classic polyphony, and therefore to the most important law of all good music. Besides the intrinsic structure, the rhythm and what is known as the conventionalism of this style adapt themselves but badly to the requirements of true liturgical music.

7. The language proper to the Roman Church is Latin. Hence it is forbidden to sing anything whatever in the vernacular in solemn liturgical functions—much more to sing in the vernacular the variable or common parts of the Mass and Office.

8. As the texts that may be rendered in music, and the order in which they are to be rendered, are determined for every liturgical function, it is not lawful to



confuse this order or to change the prescribed texts for others selected at will, or to omit them, either entirely or even in part, unless when the rubrics allow that some versicles of the text be supplied with the organ, while these versicles are simply recited in the choir. However, it is permissible, according to the custom of the Roman Church, to sing a motett to the Blessed Sacrament after the Benedictus in a Solemn Mass. It is also permitted, after the Offertory prescribed for the Mass has been sung, to execute during the time that remains a brief motett to words approved by the Church.

9. The liturgical text must be sung as it is in the books, without alteration or inversion of the words, without undue repetition, without breaking syllables, and always in a manner intelligible to the faithful who listen.

#### IV.—External Form of the Sacred Compositions

10. The different parts of the Mass and the Office must retain, even musically, that particular concept and form which ecclesiastical tradition has assigned to them, and which is admirably expressed in the Gregorian Chant. Different, therefore, must be the method of composing an introit, a gradual, an antiphon, a psalm, a hymn, a Gloria in Excelsis.

11. In particular the following rules are to be observed:

(a) The Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, etc., of the Mass must preserve the unity of composition proper to their text. It is not lawful, therefore, to compose them in separate pieces, in such a way that each of such pieces may form a complete composition itself, and be capable of being detached from the rest and substituted by another.

(b) In the office of Vespers it should be the rule to follow the *Caere moniale* *Episcoporum*, which prescribes the Gregorian Chant for the psalmody and permits figured music for the versicles of the Gloria Patri and the hymn.

It will, nevertheless, be lawful on the greater solemnities to alternate the Gregorian Chant of the choir with the so-called *falsi-bordoni* or with verses similarly composed in a proper manner.

It may be also allowed sometimes to render the single psalms in their entirety in music, provided the form proper to psalmody be preserved in such composition; that is to say, provided the singers seem to be psalmodizing among themselves, either with new motifs or with those taken from the Gregorian Chant or based upon it.

The psalms known as *di concerto* are therefore forever excluded and prohibited.

(c) In the hymns of the Church the traditional form of the hymn is preserved. It is not lawful, therefore, to compose, for instance, a *Tantum ergo* in such wise that the first strophe presents a *romanza*, a *cavatina*, an *adagio* and the *Genitori* an *allegro*.

(d) The antiphons of the Vespers must be, as a rule, rendered with the Gregorian melody, proper to each. Should they, however, in some special case, be sung in figured music they must never have either the form of a concert melody or the fulness of a motett or a cantata.

#### V.—The Singers.

12. With the exception of the melodies proper to the celebrant at the altar and to the ministers, which must be always sung only in Gregorian Chant, and without the accompaniment of the organ, all the rest of the liturgical chant belongs to the choir of levites, and, therefore, singers in church, even when they are laymen, are really taking the place of the ecclesiastical choir. Hence the music rendered by them must, at least for the greater part, retain the character of choral music.

By this it is not to be understood that solos are entirely excluded. But solo singing should never predominate in such a way as to have the greater part of the liturgical chant executed in that manner; rather should it have the character or hint of a melodic projection (*spunto*), and be strictly bound up with the rest of the choral composition.

13. On the same principle it follows that singers in church have a real liturgical office, and that, therefore, women, as being incapable of exercising such office, cannot be admitted to form part of the choir or of the musical chapel. Whenever, then, it is desired to employ the acute voices of sopranos and contraltos, these parts must be taken by boys, according to the most ancient usage of the Church.

14. Finally, only those are to be admitted to form part of the musical chapel of a church who are men of known piety and probity of life, and these should by their modest and devout bearing during the liturgical functions show that they are worthy

of the holy office they exercise. It will also be fitting that singers, while singing in church, wear the ecclesiastical habit and surplice, and that they be hidden behind gratings when the choir is excessively open to the public gaze.

**VI.—Organ and Instruments.** 15. Although the music proper to the Church is purely vocal music, music with the accompaniment of the organ is also permitted. In some special cases, within due limits and within the proper regards, other instruments may be allowed, but never without the special license of the Ordinary, according to the prescriptions of the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*.

16. As the chant should always have the principal place, the organ or instruments should merely sustain and never oppress it.

17. It is not permitted to have the chant preceded by long preludes or to interrupt it with intermezzo pieces.

18. The sound of the organ as an accompaniment to the chant in preludes, interludes and the like must be not only governed by the special nature of the instrument, but must participate in all the qualities proper to sacred music as above enumerated.

19. The employment of the piano is forbidden in church, as is also that of noisy or frivolous instruments, such as drums, cymbals, bells and the like.

20. It is strictly forbidden to have bands play in church, and only in a special case and with the consent of the Ordinary will it be permissible to admit a number of wind instruments, limited, judicious and proportioned to the size of the place—provided the composition and accompaniment to be executed be written in a grave and suitable style, and similar in all respects to that proper to the organ.

21. In processions outside the church the Ordinary may give permission for a band provided no profane pieces are executed. It would be desirable in such cases that the band confine itself to accompanying some spiritual canticle sung in Latin or in the vernacular by the singers and the pious associations which take part in the procession.

**VII.—The Length of the Liturgical Chant.** 22. It is not lawful to keep the priest at the altar waiting on account of the chant or the music for a length of time not allowed by the liturgy. According to the ecclesiastical prescriptions the Sanctus of the Mass should be over before the elevation, and therefore the priest must have regard to the singers. The Gloria and the Credo ought, according to the Gregorian tradition, to be relatively short.

23. In general it must be considered to be a very grave abuse when the liturgy in ecclesiastical functions is made to appear secondary to and in a manner at the service of the music, for the music is merely a part of the liturgy and its humble handmaid.

**VIII.—Principal Means.** 24. For the exact execution of what has been herein laid down, the Bishops, if they have not already done so, are to institute in their dioceses a special Commission composed of persons really competent in sacred music, and to this Commission let them intrust in the manner they find most suitable the task of watching over the music executed in their churches. Nor are they to see merely that the music is good in itself, but also that it is adapted to the powers of the singers and be always well executed.

25. In seminaries of clerics and in ecclesiastical institutions let the above-mentioned traditional Gregorian Chant be cultivated by all with diligence and love, according to the Tridentine prescriptions, and let the superiors be liberal of encouragement and praise toward their young subjects. In like manner let a Schola Cantorum be established, whenever possible, among the clerics for the execution of sacred polyphony and of good liturgical music.

26. In the ordinary lessons of liturgy, morals, canon law given to the students of theology, let care be taken to touch on those points which regard more directly the principles and laws of sacred music, and let an attempt be made to complete the doctrine with some particular instruction in the aesthetic side of the sacred art, so

## The Caecilia

OTTO A. SINGENBERGER.....Editor

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December 12th, 1924—

"The CAECILIA deserves every commendation and encouragement, for it is practically 'a voice crying in the wilderness.' I know of no other monthly periodical in the English language midst the great multitude of publication that espouses the cause of sacred music and brings to our notice those compositions that are in harmony with the wishes and regulations of Pope Pius X of saintly memory.

"... your efforts merit and obtain every encouragement, for there are but few like you devoting your talents and efforts to the cause of real church music, and unless your numbers grow, the beauty and impressiveness of the Church's liturgy is bound to suffer in the years to come."  
June, 1925—

"We are happy to welcome it (The CAECILIA) to the sacred precincts of our Seminary . . .

"We commend it to our clergy and our sisterhoods, for we feel that in supporting it we are helping to safeguard a precious inheritance that has come to us from the first ages of the Church."

## Seandicus and Climacus

The Motu Proprio  
issued twenty-five years  
ago.

On the feast of St. Caecilia, November 22, 1903, **twenty-five** years ago, Pope Pius X. of blessed memory, issued his celebrated Motu Proprio on Church Music.

Much has been said, and still more written regarding this great reform inaugurated by him. And after **Twenty-Five** years we cannot truthfully say that much has been done. It is true that at the time the Motu Proprio was given to the world, great efforts were

made to comply with the laws governing Church Music as laid down in that document. But, soon, very soon after, these efforts seemed to subside for some reason or other.

Church Music Commissions, as recommended in Section VIII. §24, were duly appointed in many dioceses of our country. Some functioned conscientiously for a time and then discontinued. Some continue to this present day. Undoubtedly these Commissions found themselves confronted with a herculean task. It not only meant desire, but hard determination to overcome obstacles which unexpectedly presented themselves, and which these Commissions were not prepared to meet and overcome. But let it be said, that despite all this, some good results have been obtained by some Commissions.

It seems that the Motu Proprio has and is more strictly enforced in our seminaries, convents and monasteries. Where years ago, singing and Gregorian Chant were taught to but a chosen few, usually the choir, this subject is now a regular study in the curriculum of these institutions, and particularly in our seminaries, where every student is compelled to take part in the vocal classes provided for, and likewise give a certain amount of his time each week to Gregorian Chant.

In Sec. VIII. §27, Pope Pius X. plainly urges the establishment of a Schola Cantorum in the "principal Churches" at least. This phase of the Motu Proprio has been sadly neglected. By the wording "principal Churches" we would take that he meant the Cathedral of every diocese. To our knowledge we know of no Cathedral in our country having a Schola Cantorum. Why this condition exists we know not, since the establishment of a Schola is comparatively an easy matter.

In a great many of our Parish Churches, Church Music conditions are

ideal, in others favorable, and in others again nothing at all has been done, or even attempted. There is but one explanation for this latter condition—ignorance in matters liturgical.

"Ignorance of Law excuses no man" may well be applied to the *Motu Proprio*. If anyone really wanted to be sincere in knowing and observing the same, this knowledge could have been easily obtained, since this document has often been published and explained. In order that our readers may not plead such ignorance, we publish the *Motu Proprio* in its entirety in the present issue of the *THE CAECILIA*, together with a decree by the S. S. R. of Jan. 8, 1904.

The *Motu Proprio* has been thoroughly explained in past issues of *THE CAECILIA* under the heading "The

Why and How of Church Music" by Rev. J. J. Pierron. In the near future this will be published in book form together with all the regulations governing Church Music, as a part of the "Guide to Catholic Church Music" which is now in preparation.

It remains for those who are interested not only in good music, but in the Liturgy in general, carefully to study the *Motu Proprio*, and likewise to observe it. Those entrusted with the care of choirs, and we may add those who are teachers of music in our schools, can and must enlighten the children and adults in Church Music, so that the wish and command of Mother Church, as expressed by the "people's Pope" the saintly Pius X., will at last be fulfilled. —A.—

### *Pius X Motu Proprio*

(Continued from page 109)

that the clerics may not leave the seminary ignorant of all those notions, necessary as they are for complete ecclesiastical culture.

27. Let care be taken to restore, at least in the principal churches, the ancient *Schola Cantorum*, as has been done with excellent fruit in a great many places. It is not difficult for a zealous clergy to institute such *Scholae* even in the minor and country churches—nay, in them they will find a very easy means for gathering around them both the children and the adults, to their own profit and the edification of the people.

28. Let efforts be made to support and promote in the best way possible the higher schools of sacred music where these already exist, and to help in founding them where they do not. It is of the utmost importance that the Church herself provide for the instruction of its masters, organists and singers, according to the true principles of sacred art.

#### IX.—Conclusion.

29. Finally it is recommended to choir masters, singers, members of the clergy, superiors of seminaries, ecclesiastical institutions and religious communities, parish priests and rectors of churches, canons of collegiate churches and cathedrals, and, above all, to the diocesan ordinaries, to favor with all zeal these prudent reforms, long desired and demanded with united voice by all; so that the authority of the Church, which herself has repeatedly proposed them, and now inculcates them, may not fall into contempt.

Given from Our Apostolic Palace at the Vatican, on the day of the Virgin and Martyr, St. Caecilia, November 22, 1903, in the first year Our Pontificate.

PIUS X., POPE.

#### DECREE OF THE CONGREGATION OF SACRED RIGHTS

The Congregation of Sacred Rites has issued the following Decree: *Urbs et Orbis*.

Our Holy Father, Pius X., by the "*Motu proprio*" of November 22d, in the form of an "Instruction on Sacred Music," has happily restored the ancient Gregorian Chant, as found in the codices, to its former use in the churches, and has at the same



time collected into one body the principal regulations laid down for the advancement or restoration of the sanctity and dignity of the Sacred Chant in the churches. To this body, as a Judicial Code of Sacred Music, he has given his Apostolic authority the force of law for the Universal Church. Wherefore the Holy Father, through this Congregation of Sacred Rites, *commands and ordains that the said "Instruction" be received and most religiously observed by all churches*, all privileges and exceptions to the contrary notwithstanding—even those calling for special mention, such as the privileges and exceptions conceded by the Apostolic See to the chief basilicas of the city, and particularly to the Sacred Lateran Church. So, too, are revoked all privileges and approbations by which other more recent forms of the liturgical chant were introduced by the Apostolic See and by this Congregation, in accordance with circumstances of time and place. His Holiness has been pleased to allow that these more recent forms of the liturgical chant may be lawfully retained and sung in these churches until within the briefest delay (*quamprimum fieri poterit*) the ancient Gregorian Chant according to the codices may be put in their place. Everything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Concerning all this the Holy Father, Pope Pius X., has ordered this Congregation of Sacred Rites to issue the present decree. January 8, 1904.  
L † S.

SERAPHINUS CARDINAL CRETONI,  
Prefect of the Congregation of Sacred Rites

† DIOMEDES PANCI,  
Archbishop of Laodicea, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

## Ne Letum Omnia Finiat\*

LET NOT DEATH PUT AN END TO IT ALL

By Rev. Albert Lohmann



FOR a person whose interest in Catholic Church music is not bounded by the narrow limits of his earthly existence, a concern for the revival of good and correct Church music is necessarily linked with a desire to see the good work assured of permanency. Is it not, indeed, discouraging to feel that one is laboring for the present only? True, to satisfy the needs of the present, is in itself a tremendous task, even as those needs are so often insufficiently understood in matters of Catholic Church music. As the child is father of the man, so, in Church music, the present is the maker of the future; hence the needs of the present must be met fully and squarely, if the reform of Church music, once fairly accomplished anywhere, is to endure after the workers of the present have disappeared from the scene of their labors. Unhappily in the United States, for reasons it is idle to repeat here, the present must be understood in a rather wide sense; it must be taken to comprise at least more than one genera-

tion of men. Has not, indeed, a full generation of honest workers in the cause of Church music already been laid to rest in this country? What, then, are the needs of the present? We need not go far afield. Let us but consult the *Motu Proprio*, the Church's official statement of these needs. There we shall find the programme that is to be worked out. Have you that programme? No? Ah, but you know its salient prescriptions. Do you indeed? Do you know them for what they are in fact? Do you know that they are logical conclusions drawn from some fundamental principles? Do you know those principles, live them, preach them? Bishops, priests, Religious superiors, choirmasters, and organists are not the *Motu Proprio*; but they do all come under its injunctions. Bishops, priests, Religious superiors, choirmasters, and organists come and go; they live and die. And so, too, their successors come and go. Do the fruits of their efforts in behalf of good Church music survive them? Will they survive them? If not, why not? We are not pressing for an answer in this place, so let us proceed.

While the *Motu Proprio* was still a live topic, a "personal" interpretation of it in some places decided that its sum and sub-

\*This article appeared in the May 1918 issue of THE CÆCILIA. We deem it a very timely article today.



stance consisted in the banishment of women from the choir lofts; it would be indulging one's most cruel instinct to tell what there is left today of the reform that was inaugurated with so much eclat in those places.

In other places, a little less of Farmer or Battmann, etc., or a little less even of such prestiged composers as Haydn or Mozart was (again "personally") thought adequate to fill the bill of desired reform; of our own knowledge we can say that often "owing to changed circumstances" this "a little less" became, in the course of years, less "a little less."

Again, Diocesan Commissions of Church music were named and solemnly inducted into office: some of them were about as well equipped for their task as were some Regimental Staffs of the National Guard for real war duty before they were called into Federal service; other Diocesan Commissions of Church music, however, were quite capable, worked hard and conscientiously, but when it came to delivering the executive stroke, they found their arms palsied by "personal" causes that were beyond their control.

A few years ago it was whispered—not mournfully, by no means—that the Motu Proprio had died with its august codifier. "Personal" legislation could not outlast its legislator—wasn't that a sound legal inference? There has been some disillusionment on this point recently; *some*, we said,—only *some*.

In very recent times quite a number of our Catholic papers got terribly stirred up and frantically removed the dust from their largest-sized type; there was some sensational news to report. From two dioceses had come indications of a "re-crudescence" of this old Church music reform. What a sensation it was—for those papers! Again the whole matter was made to revolve around "persons"; of principles—not a word. The readers were left to infer that only Bishop so-and-so's private and personal wishes were being carried out; that, for this reason, the matter was purely a local affair, as though the reform of Catholic Church music were a thing that, by its very nature, depended for its *raison d'être* on the will and sanction (we almost said—personal whim) of the local Ordinary.

In not a few places, the pastor and choirmaster are working in perfect accord to have and maintain correct Church music—but how? The pastor wants things

to be so, and that settles it for the parishioners—while they have that pastor. The people somehow feel that things might legitimately be otherwise, if they had a different pastor. Here, again, purely a matter of "persons."

A short time ago, we were much within earshot when a person of no mean station said the following: 'I want a Mass that hasn't too much Gregorian, or too much Cecilian (or whatever you call it), or too much Opera in it.' When that was said, some of the listeners, we doubt not, saw the halo of the golden mean descend upon the head of the distinguished speaker; for, surely, of all men, he was the least of extremists. We, too, were quite impressed—impressed mainly by two points: first, by this person's naively expressed belief in the appropriate, not to say, lawful fusibility of Gregorian, Cecilian, and "Opera"; next, by the emphasis that was put into the words "I want" and especially into "I." It was the first person—indeed very "personal."

Oh, if in matters of Catholic Church music there could be substituted everywhere in this fair land of ours for "I want," the words "The Church and her Liturgy want," how that would help us to meet the programme of the present for Church music! Yet, to meet that programme fully, there would be need of more. It is not enough to promulgate a law and then set a police-guard over its fulfillment—not in Church music, nor in art generally. Even Church discipline has its uncertainties. The iron rod of authority is potent only when wielded by a strong and steady arm. Not every arm is strong and steady; nor does authority always need the iron rod. But authority must speak. Then let it speak, and, in matters of Church music, let it speak more to the head and heart than it has, and the response will be readier and—so we would say with all possible emphasis—*more lasting*. While the people—the people of our parishes—are being told that this and that are laws, particular laws governing Church music, let them also hear, be made to understand and appreciate the *reason* underlying all these laws. Let the people know that these enactments are not arbitrary, not ephemeral, not meant to be odious, and surely are not odious in fact to a Catholic who has in innate or acquired sense and a love for the decorum of the church in which he worships his God and adores His Divine Presence. Ah,

and there is the reason for these laws—the decorum of the House of God!

Here let us pause to refresh our minds, our weary, worldly, forgetful minds, at the font of authority in the very matter that so much concerns us now. Let us listen to the fundamental principles from which have emanated the particular prescriptions of the *Motu Proprio*; let us listen to them coming, as it were, from the lips of him who, though gone to a better world, continues to shed upon the cold, unheeding world he left behind, the full fervor of his love and enthusiasm for the Liturgy of the Church over which he once ruled.

In the proemial part—we have taken the liberty both to abbreviate and to italicize—of his *Motu Proprio*, Pope Pius X gives utterance to the following:

"Among the cares of the pastoral office, not only of this Supreme Chair, . . . but of every local church, a leading one is without question that of maintaining and promoting the decorum of the House of God in which the august mysteries of religion are celebrated, and where the Christian people assemble to receive the grace of the Sacraments, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the altar, to adore the most august Sacrament of the Lord's Body, and to unite in the common prayer of the Church in the public and solemn liturgical offices. Nothing should have place, therefore in the temple calculated to disturb or even merely to diminish the piety and devotion of the faithful, nothing that may give reasonable cause for disgust or scandal, nothing, above all, which directly offends the decorum and sanctity of the sacred functions and is thus unworthy of the House of Prayer and the Majesty of God. We do not touch separately on the abuses in this matter which may arise. To-day Our attention is directed to one of the most common of them, one of the most difficult to eradicate, and the existence of which is sometimes to be deplored in places where everything else is deserving of the highest praise . . . Such is the abuse affecting sacred chant and music. And indeed, . . . there is a general tendency to deviate from the right rule prescribed by the end for which art is admitted to the service of public worship and which is set forth very clearly in the ecclesiastical canons, in the ordinances of the general and provincial councils, in the prescriptions which have at various times emanated from the sacred Roman congregations and from Our Predecessors, the Sovereign Pontiffs . . . We consider it Our first duty, without further delay, to raise Our voice at once in reproof and condemnation of all that is seen to be out of harmony with the right rule above indicated, in the functions of public worship and in the performance of the ecclesiastical offices. Filled as We are with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, We deem it necessary to provide before aught else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. And it is vain to hope that the blessing of Heaven will descend abundantly upon us, when our

homage to the Most High, instead of ascending in the odor of sweetness, puts into the Hand of the Lord the scourges wherewith of old the Divine Redeemer drove the unworthy profaners from the temple. . . . Hence, in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty, and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters which have already been commanded. We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music in the functions of public worship and to gather together in a general survey the more common abuses in this subject. We do, therefore, publish *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge Our present instruction, to which, as to a juridical code of sacred music, We will, with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority, that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.

#### General Principles

1.—Sacred music being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It contributes to the decorum and splendor of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries.

2.—Sacred music should consequently possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and precisely sanctity and goodness of form, from which its other character of universality spontaneously springs.

a) It must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.

b) It must be true art . . . to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds.

c) It must be universal . . . (i. e.) special forms of native music (to be admissible as ecclesiastical compositions—A. L.) must be subordinated in such a manner to the general characteristics of sacred music that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them."

Is there anything in those words of Pius X to indicate that he wished the reform of Church music merely as a passing glory and achievement of his Pontificate? He speaks of the reform as the necessary compliance with the "right rule" i.e. with the propriety essential to the House of God. Again and again he points to this "right rule;" but not once does he ask this compliance as a *personal* favor. He makes his plea as a duty of his Supreme Pastoral Office; he wishes the "true Christian spirit to flourish in every respect" and "to be preserved by all;" and the "foremost and indispensable fount" whence the people are to draw that spirit is in the House of God,—is the "active participation of the people in the

most holy mysteries in the public and solemn prayer of the Church." What is this found else than the Liturgy of the Church—but the Liturgy complete and entire? Music is an integral part of it, but not properly so, unless it conform to the "right rule"—this is explicitly stated in the "General Principles" of the *Motu Proprio*, as cited above. When Pius X raised his voice against the abuses in Church music, was it not to insure a perpetuation of the Liturgy in all its parts? Can anyone, now living, honestly claim that he is working to execute the laws governing Church music in the spirit in which they were given, unless, like Pius X, he eliminated personal considerations from his pleas and endeavors, unless he eliminates his personal self with all its whims, wishes, and interests, and substitutes therefor the 'right rule,' the spirit and the exigencies of the Liturgy? Oh, this liturgical spirit! Why do not we, the workers of the present, the workers for the cause of Catholic Church music, breathe it more deeply? For us and for all, it is preservative of true Christian life. Has not Pius X himself said so above? Let us cultivate it, and then let us all join, by instruction and example, in leading the people intelligently and patiently away from their worldly selves, away from their whims and petty wishes into this spiritual atmosphere, this liturgical atmosphere that is at once so invigorating and so free from germs of decay. In that atmosphere we shall find the elements of growth for spiritual life and of development and endurance for a sense of decorous Church music. In that atmosphere we must rear our edifice of Church music—not, indeed, upon the shifting and crumbling base of human or personal interests, but upon the solid and secure basis of the sacred Liturgy. Then, and only then, if we must go to rest our weary heads in final sleep, shall we go without anxiety; for we shall know of our work that "Death will not put an end to it all."

The ancient Greeks said things very circumstantially at times, as, for instance, in *hypoproslambanomenos*, their musical term for the sub-tone of their *systema teleion*, or complete tone-system. Here then, it took them eight syllables and twenty letters to say *G*. At that rate, how long did it take them to say *G-whizz*?

## Miscellany

How long should one study harmony? A blunt and not at all unlikely question in this age of commercialized music. Let us see. Harmony as a system is an attempted arrangement into a code of rules of what the human ear, in its normally sensitive condition and in a fairly modern civilization, has decreed in regard to tone and chord combination. The greater or lesser competency of the ear to judge in this capacity depends on the great or lesser acquaintance and experience it has had with a variety of tone and chord combinations. The harmonic ear, then is capable of being trained; and just the dictates of such a well-trained ear form the basis of a legitimate system of harmony. The study of the laws of harmony is of little avail unless it go hand in hand with an effort on the student's part to realize and verify these laws in his own ear, which, it is supposed, has had some previous acquaintance with the acoustic phenomena from which the laws of harmony have been deduced. This means that the student's ear must be trained to an analytical chord-experience. And how long will it take to master a system of harmony and get this indispensable ear-training? Not long. Does not the ad in your magazine read: "Harmony taught by mail in twenty lessons?" But harmony in its proper sense immeasurable transcends any of its systems. It comprises all the possibilities of harmonic formation; and these are well-nigh unlimited. Hence the study of harmony, to be in some degree exhaustive, must not stop with a particular system. It will have to be more than a matter of weeks or months or even of a few years. It must be the study of a life-time.

It is consoling to read that correct music is performed at the church services held in connection with annual conventions of a great national Catholic organization. But we cannot wax enthusiastic over these reports whenever we are given the added information that the music was performed by choirs specially formed (we say *formed* advisedly, no reinforced) for these occasions or by outside choirs of repute that were called in to shoulder the musical burden of these days as an act of charity to the local choir or choirs.



We confess to a keener interest in knowing what musical programs are rendered in these convention churches on the Sundays following adjournment.

If there be anybody who has amassed a fortune solely in the exercise of his duties as a Catholic organist and choirmaster, he may make a few extra dollars by communicating to this magazine the story of how he did it.

Jazz bands are disorganizations of people who manage, by the use of instrument of torture, to give pleasure to hosts of willing victims,

In musical as in other matters, the *jurare in verba magistri* often means that the magister is being misquoted or misinterpreted; oftener still it means that the magister's former disciples are afflicted with mental atrophy or inertia.

One harmony in the head is worth ten in the book.

One harmony in the hand is worth a hundred in the book.

There may be slovenly artists, but there can be no slovenly art.

Strange but true: less quantity in art makes for more art.

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